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STATINTL

The President Still Worries Over Censorship Of News

In another conference with newsmen, this time with a more select group, President Kennedy was still concerned over whether there is a need for any censorship of the news—either government or voluntary—at this time.

Representatives of the press, after meeting with the President for more than an hour this week, told Kennedy they did not believe the world situation had reached the point where it was necessary to set up machinery to censor information that appears in newspapers. The President assured the group that the Administration intends to continue its policy of free access to the news (a campaign promise severely questioned a few weeks ago by the American Newspaper Publishers Association) and that no form of restriction is contemplated or suggested.

While at first blush, there may seem times when the best interests of the country would be served by withholding certain information, the over-all benefits of a free and unhampered press overshadows the few isolated cases.

CIA's Allen Dulles said recently that he had rather take his chances with free reporting of the news than have it tampered with.

There are faults to a democracy. It is not a perfect system. But it is the best form of government yet devised by man. And in the case of a free press, in the long run the individual rights of American citizens are best served.

When a chisel is allowed to chip away any fragment of a constitutional right, at that very moment is the entire structure of freedom threatened.